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AUTHOR Hughes, Maria
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ABSTRACT

This document, which is designed for managers responsible for human resource development (HRD) policy and planning in the United Kingdom's further education (FE) colleges, draws on evidence from a study of 10 FE colleges to illustrate good practices in developing and implementing college policies and strategies for HRD. Presented first are a brief description of the study on which the document is based and a discussion of the distinctions among the terms "staff development," "HRD," "personnel management," and "human resource management." Next, the relationship between human resource strategies and corporate planning and the relationships among the various aspects of a coherent HRD strategy are examined. Concerns of HRD managers identified during the study are listed. The next seven sections explore the following issues that were identified during the initial research and consultation with the 10 FE colleges: support for new roles and responsibilities; facilitating and supporting cultural change; the role of appraisal; alternative approaches to delivery of staff development; strategic links between curriculum and staff development and college planning; integrated approaches to a whole college HRD function; and maintaining and improving quality by evaluating effectiveness. Concluding the document are a summary, a list of reminders for HRD managers, 10 acknowledgements and 1 reference. (MN)

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Developing college policies and strategies for human resource development

MARIA HUGHES

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'Human resource development (HRD) has developed into an important central, strategic, tactical and operational function of college organisation.'

Since incorporation, colleges in the FE sector have had sole responsibility for the strategic planning, resourcing and delivery of HRD. Rapid changes in the governance and organisation of the sector coupled with greater demands for flexibility and enhanced performance, call for the development of human resource strategies which are responsive to the needs of the institution, the curriculum, the customers and, importantly, to all staff.

As corporate bodies colleges must embed all responsibility for the planning, development, and implementation of curriculum and

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staff development firmly within the college organisation. The greatest item of expenditure in college budgets, at around 70%, is staffing: staff are colleges' most valuable, as well as their most expensive, resource. If colleges are to succeed over the next decade, it will be largely due to the deployment, motivation and skills of their employees.

In order to assess the extent to which FE colleges were meeting the challenge of linking HRD policies to wider organisational strategic plans, the Further Education Development Agency's (FEDA)'s predecessor, the Further Education Unit (FEU) undertook a project to:

- identify a range of current HRD practice in colleges
- identify specific strategies and tactics to meet new demands
- produce general guidance on policies and strategies for HRD

Ten colleges provided evidence during structured interviews and attendance at expert seminars. Seven of these colleges subsequently produced case studies.

Using this bulletin

This bulletin identifies key issues from the project, drawing on the evidence from colleges and case-study materials to illustrate practice. It is designed to be of practical use to managers in FE colleges responsible for HRD policy and planning.

Defining terms

During the initial research stage of the project the need to define current understanding of the following terms became clear:

- staff development
- human resource development
- personnel management
- human resource management (HRM)

The main areas of confusion appear to be:

- whether staff development is the same as HRD
- where HRD stops and HRM starts
- the nature of links between 'personnel' staff and HRD/HRM staff

Greater clarity is needed in articulating the difference between routine HRD such as induction programmes; personnel issues such as contracts of employment and conditions of service; professional development; and curriculum and institutional development. Equally, the management of HRD and associated procedures such as monitoring, auditing and budget control may be undertaken by a wide range of staff and may be separate from the decision-making and agenda-setting processes.

For the purposes of the project the following working definition was agreed:

> **HRD is any activity or process which develops the skills, knowledge and attitudes of members of staff for both current and future tasks and roles within the context of the strategic or organisational plan.**

However, the varied terminology of the college quotes in this bulletin reflects the transition towards a developed human resource (HR) function in colleges.

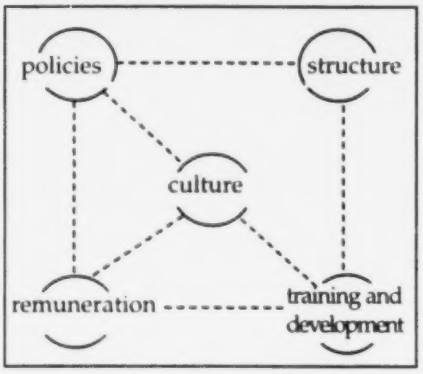
Exploring the issues

Colleges have now not only to recruit all their own staff but also to identify strategic approaches to the HR function across the organisation which will ensure that all staff receive development and updating appropriate to the teaching, learning and operational needs of the organisation.

This commitment needs to be considered alongside the management of human resources. An exact match between the needs of the institution and the demands placed upon it by external factors, and the capacity of its staff to meet these needs is unlikely. Colleges need to develop an HR strategy that is linked to their strategic plan and based on the existing and future HR skills and needs of the organisation.

The diagram below indicates the relationship of a human resource strategy to corporate planning.

There are important relationships between the various aspects of a coherent human resource strategy:



Changes to or developments of any of these have repercussions on the others. They need to be synchronised or training and development will not produce strategic change.

Concerns

Several pressing concerns are evident amongst HR managers, especially:

- how to meet the demands of the curriculum with appropriate and timely staff development and training opportunities
- how to ensure that the ongoing process of curriculum needs identification and staff skills audit are incorporated into the college strategic planning and review
- how to meet the development needs of support staff within a context of new standards of customer service
- how staff development and training may be delivered, and by whom, and the resource implications of this
- how this activity may be acknowledged and valued
- how to ensure that staff career development needs are considered alongside the needs of FE institutions

Issues

Several issues arose from the initial research and consultation with colleges:

- support for new roles and responsibilities
- facilitating and supporting cultural change
- the role of appraisal
- alternative approaches to the delivery of staff development
- strategic links between curriculum and staff development and college planning
- integrated approaches to a whole college human resource function
- maintaining and improving quality

These were then explored further by the colleges in seminars and the case studies. They are expanded on in the following pages.

Support for new roles and responsibilities

HRD AS A MANAGEMENT FUNCTION

'In functions relating to the support and development of staff ... the implementation and structured development of policies is largely carried out at line management level. This is not merely to stress that line managers have a personnel management function— it is to emphasise that in this college line managers are expected to act as transformational leaders helping to shape and develop the culture and climate of the college.'

The flatter organisational structures now evident in many colleges have spread the management function more widely. Line managers of both teaching and support staff carry more responsibility for shaping and implementing the colleges' strategic and operational objectives. This happens particularly at middle-management level because of:

- the emphasis placed on the line management function in appraisal
- the role of line managers in negotiating and implementing new working practices resulting from the introduction of new contracts for teaching staff
- the responsibility for efficient staff management placed on line managers by devolved unit-costed staffing budgets
- the responsibility of line managers in relation to the planning and evaluation of training and development (with reference to IIP)

The growth of a new group within the college, for example in marketing, learner support services, estates management also has implications for HRD. Equally, curriculum leaders faced with new initiatives such as GNVQs in their subject area, may need to identify staff development needs and help meet these.

HRD SUPPORT FOR MANAGERS

Management development programmes tend to operate at several different levels; in most cases the remit is to develop management skills in several broad areas.

HRD support through job shadowing and secondments, both within the college and with outside agencies, may be an important catalyst to improving work practices and developing a shared understanding of issues.

Colleges involved: 4

Senior managers, particularly at principal or chief executive level, may rely on *ad hoc* opportunities to attend courses or conferences for their own development. A more coherent approach, perhaps through an extension of appraisal systems and IAPs, is as important for this group as for any other.

Specific development issues for senior managers are emerging as:

- understanding the market place
- applying new management structures
- working with a board of governors
- developing a flexible work force
- identifying new roles and responsibilities across the college management team

EXTENDING THE HRD FUNCTION

'Corporate colleges need to link staff development more closely to strategic organisational priorities and imperatives. This alters the traditional roles and responsibilities of the staff development officer, and so the nature of a post that has been viewed as primarily having a delivery function...'

Many factors are requiring colleges to take more strategic approaches to the HRD function. They include:

- the move to a corporate-goals driven model more like a personnel/ industrial relations model
- the emphasis on learning outcomes and achieving high inspection grades
- the achievement of quality kitemarks

HRD: PREPARATION FOR PROMOTION

In one of the project colleges the newly appointed principal decided to revise the traditional selection process for internal upgrading to include an element of role play as well as formal interview, and to link the questions more closely to the job and person specifications.

Although all candidates were advised of this in advance the experience proved unsatisfactory for all concerned. The lack of previous training in job applications and interview techniques, or in the specific subject expertise for the post had resulted in candidates being ill-prepared for the experience.

With the approval of the college management, governors and union representatives a training programme was arranged for any interested staff before the posts were re-advertised. It included advice on job applications, selection procedures, coping strategies and particular aspects of the posts. The college subsequently had no difficulty in filling the posts and the two new postholders have been well accepted by their teams.

These changes affect the traditional staff development role, in that there is now:

- more emphasis on strategic approaches to staff development
- increased recognition of the staff development function at senior management decision-making level
- greater integration of staff development activity into the strategic planning cycle
- the development of strategies and policies that link the wider curriculum needs of the organisation with individual development needs
- the development of organisational structures reflecting the HR responsibility of colleges, including links between personnel and HRM

- increased financial and budgetary responsibilities

The activity traditionally known as 'staff development' is becoming a more all-embracing HRD activity, with particular recognition of an HR management role, especially where appraisal schemes are being implemented.

Recognition of the strategic and operational functions of HRD carries significant implications:

- acknowledgement of the important HRD role of line managers and curriculum leaders needs to be accompanied by appropriate support
- managers at all levels need a structured programme matching the needs of the individual manager to the wider changing management role
- the staff development function needs to reflect the changing nature of the organisation with the HRD function at the centre of the wider strategic planning of the teaching and learning activities.

Cultural change

> Culture is the shared beliefs, values and norms of a company in so far as these drive shared patterns of behaviour ... four principles summarise culture:
> - shared patterns of behaviour..
> - shared assumptions and beliefs
> - shared values
> - shared norms
>
> Egan

The two driving forces behind much current organisational change are:

- the shift from an allocation to an earning model of funding, based on outcomes, which requires colleges to focus on student-related performance indicators as well as on management effectiveness
- the customer-service orientation and concomitant changes in operations

The inevitable shift towards a customer focus may not fit easily with the sense of vocation which traditionally led many staff into teaching.

It is also necessary to be aware of the sub-cultures within an organisation. Each will have its own set of beliefs and commitment. To achieve a corporate approach it will be necessary to gain the commitment of all staff to the organisation, its goals and its future. Focusing on shared values is an important aspect of this process and can be promoted through consultation over:

- the college mission statement
- the strategic plan
- college conferences
- all approaches to quality management

In this context, professional development becomes the systematic process by which individual staff develop their knowledge, skills and personal qualities as fully as possible in order to enable the college to make the best use of its human resources Mission statements need to reflect that:

> 'The college will seek to maximise the provision of education, training, and related activities for everyone over the age of 16 in the ... local community ... and further afield as relevant. It will achieve this within the following parameters:
>
> - having regard for the principles of quality, flexibility and care for all its provision
> - ensuring the achievement of local or national education and training targets
> - making the best possible use of its human, financial and material resources'

Support provided to individuals and the recognition that decisions made at one level may take longer than anticipated to be accepted at other levels are vital to the management of change.

A college-wide communications policy may help support wider acceptance of cultural change. By containing open statements about how strategic decisions are made and implemented, and identifying individual roles, responsibilities and involvement in that process, it can make an important contribution to the development of a shared vision.

Starting from the planning cycle and its wide-ranging consultative process the discussion of priorities for the organisation improves understanding. The difficulties are:

- achieving a priority for this process above day-to-day business
- ensuring the discussion moves beyond semantics
- enabling staff to contribute, including those who may not perceive an immediate relevance
- reflecting the contribution of a possible diversity of responses in subsequent decisions

The colleges found that college conferences on a common theme helped to underpin the planning process and shared vision. At one such event all staff contributed to a sector-based and college-wide action plan which included a commitment to publication of information about staff, simplification of paper-based systems, improved staff/student liaison and provision, staff development and work shadowing.

Key points include:

- tension caused by the existence of different cultures in organisations will take time to resolve
- viewing staff as 'internal' customers is increasingly being seen as the way to assist the process of cultural change
- achieving the right balance between sympathy with the views of staff and culture, and the need to apply robust methods to a goal-driven model
- appropriate HRD activity, particularly if combined with a communications policy, may reduce stress and promote positive attitudes to change

Appraisal

Staff development planning has become better informed through appraisal. Although individual appraisal action plans are confidential, appraisal managers are expected to identify trends in staff development needs for communication to the college's staff development team.

Appraisal schemes play a key role in the development of coherent approaches to HRD. Broadly, the aims and objectives are:

- to support the achievement of the college's strategic plan and corporate objectives
- to enhance the quality of the service offered by the college
- to contribute to the continuous improvement of the quality of the student's experience
- to help with the professional development and career planning of college employees in a fair way

Appraisal schemes allow structured discussion between staff and line managers, linking personal development needs with management needs. They may promote a culture of life-long learning within the organisation, particularly if targets for development are viewed within a learning culture rather than as flaws requiring remedial action.

Development of appraisal schemes has helped make the linking of individual and corporate goals more explicit.

At one of the participating colleges, an existing institutional development plan included the concept of 'lead issues'. These were:

- the need to individualise the student offer
- the commitment to an entitlement curriculum for all learners
- a commitment to quality
- a commitment to widen opportunity

Appraisal provided the opportunity to link appraisal and staff with the lead issues of the college.

Appraisal schemes have also helped with up-to-date and relevant job descriptions focused on performance targets and competences rather than duties and responsibilities. Effective teaching and learning must be a significant factor in these targets if the quality of service is to be enhanced. One college was committed to including classroom observation (and task observation for support staff) as an element of appraisal. Appraisers, themselves, may need help with this.

Key points include:

- it is important to recognise that approaches to appraisal, or any other centralised HRD activity, must not start from a deficiency model. 'Entitlement to enhancement' needs to be firmly embedded in all strategic approaches to HRD
- effective HRD support to line managers involved in appraisal is vital
- how appraisal is developed within colleges will have a significant impact on how well it is accepted, and whether there is genuine feeling of 'ownership' of the process amongst staff
- developing systems for monitoring and evaluating the achievements of appraisal will also be crucial; from building in informal procedures for reviewing IAPs to formal evaluation procedures built into the process
- the development of effective teaching and learning must be central to the appraisal process

Alternative approaches

The provision of staff development activities to date has been primarily through the use of external training agencies .... while the college continues to utilise such opportunities where appropriate, there exists a growing awareness of the value of staff expertise within the institution and of the need to utilise such expertise in the provision of professional development across the college.

Although there has been an increase in investment in professional development in most colleges, there is an urgent need to monitor expenditure, checking value for money. Internal provision can result in many staff receiving professional development at minimal cost, with less disruption to teaching.

One of the project colleges did a value-for-money analysis of staff development which showed that despite less funding after withdrawal of GEST in 1994, the average length of staff development

activity has increased. This perhaps indicates more significant activities but the cost per attendance is increasing and, although the college aims to spend 1.5% of its income on staff development, the budget is under significant strain.

Any decisions about programmes will need to examine:

- the effectiveness of the programmes available
- the cost
- the time
- the potential for wider dissemination
- the outcomes

There are many alternative **in-house** routes that a college may consider:

- infill on to college part-time courses, especially in areas like word processing and higher level IT skills
- structured internal and external networking activities, to facilitate cross-fertilisation of ideas and the development of good practice
- individual opportunities for R&D around identified areas of curriculum interest
- internal induction programmes
- mentoring
- development of in-house teams to reflect on and make recommendations on existing practice
- cross-college INSET days, including short courses which may lead to external accreditation
- dissemination of findings from external course programmes
- the work of curriculum teams which can develop, implement, monitor and evaluate programmes

Many of these activities may already be in place. Colleges should consider how to capture their HRD potential, perhaps through recording achievement and portfolio building. It is important that staff contribution to their own and the college's development is recognised.

The value of individual development activities should also not be under-estimated. For many staff this may be the most important method and may be enhanced by encouraging:

- access to open learning facilities
- effective communication and dissemination of specialist journals, reports and papers
- membership of specialist organisations
- internal work-shadowing and work - placement

Benefits of in-house provision include:

- the utilisation and development of staff expertise
- the development of individual self-esteem and recognition of 'staff worth' across the organisation resulting in increased motivation
- more effective understanding of the aims and organisational objectives of the college, and the enhanced roles of individuals within these
- transfer of good practice and a responsiveness to quality assurance
- easier and more immediate access by staff to development activities
- more economic use of professional development funds
- the opportunity to focus on training for specific and immediate needs
- the enhancement of qualifications for staff e.g. NVQs

There are, nonetheless significant benefits to be gained from externally organised programmes:

- external consultants can help 'launch change', having no 'agenda' within the college
- dissemination of good practice from elsewhere
- local, regional or national workshops enable staff to exchange ideas with other colleges, and learn about national developments
- buying in external expertise not available in the college
- supporting continuous change and updating through external networking

A balance between the two is required.

Most programmes of professional development involve a cost in paid cover for staff. While colleges may operate a formula for external opportunities, there are moves to minimise the cover for local/in-house provision. There is also a growing culture of reciprocal cover arrangements which suggests that staff are increasingly prepared to help the training of colleagues because they may seek similar support in the future.

Where perceived needs of staff are not directly linked to the college's strategic plan, but evolve from aspirations associated with the acquisition of higher degrees, professional qualifications, etc. some colleges are offering support as a part of new conditions of service:

- colleges should consider a wide range of delivery methods for HRD and encourage staff to be pro-active in their own and in their colleagues' professional development
- forming 'clusters of colleges' for staff development should be encouraged, although there are difficulties in a climate that fosters competition
- pressure on resources means greater impetus to develop internal structures for staff development that will cause as little disruption as possible, e.g. common time periods, grouping staff from across the organisation; structured opportunities for individuals to meet and discuss issues

Developing strategic links

Models linking curriculum and HRD development, the key development issues for colleges, are being created, for example:

MODEL

In common with many colleges the staff development/planning cycle was put in place to link the processes of needs analysis: deciding priorities; planning; implementation; dissemination and review. Linking staff development more closely to a strategic, whole college approach made it necessary to align all stages of the staff development planning cycle to those of the college's wider strategic planning cycle.

This process involves:

NEEDS ANALYSIS

Staff development representatives (representing all faculties and services) undertake a needs analysis after an initial planning session, which includes an update on college planning issues and external change factors. The representatives consult staff at all levels and in appropriate groupings, and compile a list of development needs and an indication of preferred delivery methods and produce a prioritised needs analysis steered by strategic and business plans.

Similar information is gathered from college committees and workings; cross college co-ordinators; the executive and their management teams.

These needs analyses are presented at the staff development committee in the early spring.

Planning activities and intended outcomes

The needs analysis is then progressed into a draft development plan, with priorities being met according to the resources available in the development budget. The draft development plan, outlining proposed development activities is presented to the staff development committee in April. A development project steering group identifies projects from the needs analysis.

Monitoring

Staff development budgets and activities are monitored through the staff development officer and staff development committee using a computerised management system.

Review and evaluation

The planning cycle is reviewed annually at the staff development committee. All development activities are evaluated. Reports are produced on local college development projects. Feedback is sought from all participants on staff development activities, and proposals for 'embedding' developments are discussed.

Dissemination

College and faculty staff development days, and occasional seminars are commonly used mechanisms for information other staff about progress and for sharing outcomes and ideas from development activities.

The benefits of this combined approach to staff and curriculum development include::

- reinforcing the sense that development work is curriculum or provision driven
- emphasising the broadest definition of curriculum and its ownership of it by all staff
- avoiding unnecessary duplication
- reinforcing the sense of staff development being part of the responsibility of all managers

Greater emphasis on curriculum as opposed to individual development places responsibility for identifying and meeting staff training needs on curriculum leaders and teams. This should, in theory, bring about more responsiveness and a better fit between the curriculum and staff development.

Key points include:

- moves to link staff development more closely to a strategic, whole college approach make it necessary to expand the remit of the normal staff development planning cycle to cover both staff and curriculum development
- making strategic links between curriculum and staff development can make an important contribution to the achievement of effective teaching and learning, and ensure involvement of all staff
- planning procedures need to be responsive to take account of sudden, unpredictable needs and activities should be regularly monitored and reviewed to ensure they are still relevant

- a logical extension of this process would be to ensure that support staff are included, or that similar systems operate to ensure their needs are met in line with the requirements of the institutional objectives

Developing integrated approaches

The HRD function needs to be integrated into the other HR functions of the organisation, as well as into the wider strategic planning process. Models for the achievement of this are, however, as diverse as the provision itself. They include:

- a specialist unit which fuses the staff development and personnel function into an overarching HR unit
- locating the HRD responsibility at an assistant, associate or deputy principal level
- the development of professional tutor/professional development manager roles linked to senior management team roles
- extending the remit and responsibilities of the staff development officer
- a curriculum team approach.

Whatever model or, more likely, models are deployed, there is a debate in colleges about the relationship between the HRD and HRM functions.

The management of change in colleges requires an integrated approach to HR roles and responsibilities. An integrated approach will require all line managers to undertake a skills audit and needs analysis across all areas of college activity - linked to the college's strategic and operational plan - to reveal the current skills and knowledge of staff and identify gaps.

In an increasingly competitive climate, colleges may be less willing to develop their staff without a commitment from them to remain with the organisation for a specified time. 'Poaching' of staff is common in business and has been identified as a factor in the reluctance of some firms to invest in training. The removal of the FE sector from centrally earmarked funds has weakened the idea of a body of staff in whom the sector as a whole invests. Alongside this, is a growing concept of individual commitment to training and development and an enhanced professionalism within a culture of life-long learning. However, this concept needs to be nurtured by greater recognition for new skills and qualifications obtained by staff within a supportive qualification framework.

Equally, colleges will need to look to the future and consider recruitment policies which take into account new skills requirement in line with a 'one staff philosophy'. A review of the different ways in which teaching and support staff managers experience training and development should be undertaken, with a view to bringing the two closer together. Such integration may be difficult to achieve but colleges which have adopted this approach report enthusiastically on its benefits in terms of better understanding of respective roles and contribution to fulfilling the colleges' mission.

One of the colleges noted,

> In this college there was a determined effort to alter the perception that only teaching staff were central to college activities by the re-naming of non-teaching staff as 'business support staff' and by ensuring that their contribution and importance is reflected throughout the organisation.The most important issue for business support staff is that of recognition and valuing their contribution to college activities as integral to the teaching process which is the main business of the college.

Another difficult issue is the involvement of part-time staff in a 'one-staff philosophy' for HRD, particularly those working fewer than six hours a week. Internal appraisal commitments and wider HRD activities are as important for part-time staff as they are to full-time staff but that methods of delivery and access to programmes need to be adjusted appropriately. The emergence of part-time staffing organisations from which colleges sub-contract staff may solve colleges' difficulties relating to employment rights but locating responsibility for the development of this potentially substantial body of staff is as yet unclear.

Changing HR needs call for a more integrated, coherent approach to HR generally, incorporating:

- the creation of integrated work teams
- the development of a 'one staff' philosophy
- the implementation of new contractual obligations and responsibilities
- the development of part-time staff including those subcontracted from another organisation
- the longer-term development of recruitment policies that reflect the needs of the whole organisation
- overall responsibility for the professional development of the sector needs to be determined

Quality

> The college demonstrated its commitment to quality in HRM by being the first college in the country to achieve Investors in People status. In the FEFC Inspection report the depth and breadth of staff qualifications and experience was identified as a major strength.

Colleges are attempting to harmonise all strategic approaches to internal and external quality requirements.

FEFC inspection requirements; IiP; internal quality assurance procedures and, equally, appraisal systems are integral parts of the QA process.

As one college noted,

> The college is approaching FEFC inspection at the same time as progressing towards the achievement of the Investors in People award. This provides the opportunity to harness the shared commitment and motivation of staff

These processes need to be aligned to ensure coherence and reduce duplication and the HRD contribution needs to be explicit.

The following issues are common to all quality planning processes:

- management of *continuous* change within the organisation
- development of the learning organisation

- performance management systems
- the shift to HRD as a strategically planned activity

Common cross-college QA documentation is essential and needs to engage all staff rather than just the manager responsible for quality.

Quality manuals should contain guidelines for the ongoing development and maintenance of quality provision:

> The college's QA system is described in several key documents which cover the various parts of the system. The current system is described in:
>
> - Curriculum & Services Quality: the framework of our quality system
> - Quality Panels: dealing with validation, review and evaluation, standards (performance indicator setting)
> - *A guide to Documentation and Management* : one of a series of booklets looking at portfolios of evidence at differing levels of activity within the 'quality route'.

Evaluating the effectiveness

Systems need to be developed to ensure continuous improvement across all college activity. Some colleges are taking a structured approach involving regular reflection and review of all aspects of college provision.

> Procedures for review and evaluation are built into the quality procedures, and mechanisms exist for feedback through a range of panels and committees to a planning cycle that can effect change and make recommendations for modification of practice.

It has also been recognised, however, that HRD can help individuals recognise evaluation responsibilities within their own practice and this has implications for the wider college offer.

Among college-wide systems for reflection and review, very clear systems are required to evaluate how effectively HRD strategy is supporting the overall college principles and priorities. The closer the link to the college's strategic and operational objectives the easier this will be, particularly if performance indicators have been set in advance.

Appraisal at an individual level is clearly an integral part of a college-wide review process. Appropriate mechanisms need to be developed to ensure the development needs identified as a result can be fed back into the college-wide review and evaluation process without affecting issues of staff confidence and openness.

- The achievement of quality provision will inevitably underpin all strategic approaches to HRD but systems need to be integrated in a way that ensures coherence and clarity to all staff at all levels.
- QA systems need to move towards a state of continuous self-reflection, review and improvement rather than being developed to comply with the needs of external contractors or inspection procedures.
- Review and evaluation can be time-consuming and costly. Colleges should minimise this by rationalising procedures and setting performance indicators.
- Encouraging all staff at all levels to recognise their role in the continuous improvement of provision is a longer-term but essential goal.

SUMMARY

- As corporate bodies, responsibility for planning, development and implementation of both curriculum and staff development is firmly lodged with the colleges.
- HRD has an important central, strategic, tactical and operational function within the organisation, and therefore must link closely to the strategic planning cycle.
- Recognising and responding to the changing functions of many college personnel is an important aspect of strategic approaches to HRD.
- Internal liaison and integration between personnel, HRD and HRM functions are vital. The method may vary but must ensure regular dialogue, and sharing of information and priorities.
- A significant cultural change is taking place throughout the sector. Developing a shared vision may assist this change. Managers implementing policies with a 'top down' approach should recognise the importance of allowing teaching and support staff time to assimilate new ideas and priorities.
- The development of a coherent, cross-college appraisal system, supported by effective training and documentation, is increasingly being seen as a cornerstone of strategic approaches to.HRD.
- Establishing cross-college systems for identifying and responding to HRD needs, and linking these to a wider college planning cycle, ensure effective links between curriculum, staff and strategic planning.
- Delivery of HRD policies can be achieved through a range of approaches, including both internal and external activities.
- Colleges must harmonise all strategic approaches to HRD internal and external quality requirements, e.g. FEFC inspection require.ments, IiP, internal QA procedures.
- An evaluation cycle must be built into all HRD strategies and policies to ensure continuous improvement; including encouraging individual staff to take responsibility for review and evaluation.

MESSAGES

- Colleges need to develop policies based on corporate strategic goals and targets that link curriculum and human resource development.
- Development of coherent HRD strategies is central to the achievement of quality in the teaching and learning activities of the organisation and high grades in inspection and external quality kitemarks.
- Harnessing the energy and enthusiasm of staff through developing their individual roles, and also their involvement in the wider planning process will lead to a greater assimilation of change and development across the organisation.
- There have been significant changes in many roles within organisations and these need to be recognised in wider HRD planning. Development of a 'one staff philosophy' must be both a short-and longer-term goal.
- Engaging all staff in ownership of continuous review and improvement of the teaching and learning process will be central to the continued growth and development of the organisation.

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Copies of the case studies are obtainable on request.

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Further information

For further information on the issues raised in this document, please contact:

Maria Hughes,
FEDA Northern Regional Officer,
10th Floor, Wellbar House,
Gallowgate,
Newcastle-upon-Tyne,
NE1 4TP

Tel/fax: 0191 2013371

If you need further copies of this publication, please contact FEDA's Vauxhall site, Information Centre, Citadel Place, Tinworth Street, London SE11 5EH

Tel: 0171 962 1280
Fax: 0171 962 1266

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